



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 20 March 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
20 MARCH 1967

1. South Vietnam

Ambassador Bui Diem--now in Saigon--says that approval of the draft constitution by the Armed Forces Council will be "merely a formality."

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The council will probably be convened soon after the Guam Conference, with the constitution itself being promulgated early next month. The election date for president and vice president has been set for 3 September; 4 September for the upper house and 1 October for the lower house.

2. North Vietnam

Peking went out of its way in speeches and editorials over the weekend to reaffirm its support for Hanoi. The ostensible reason for this was the 17th anniversary of "Vietnam Day Against US Imperialism." The primary purpose, however, was to reinforce the North Vietnamese conviction that Hanoi will win in the long run and that negotiation would be useless. The Chinese probably see the Guam Conference as leading to a sizable US escalation, and these latest statements out of Peking are meant to stiffen Hanoi's resolve.

3. Soviet Union

A Soviet officer in Moscow has promised the US defense attaché that next summer's air parade will be "very interesting." A big show in this the 50th year since the October revolution would certainly not be surprising. The Soviets have several developmental aircraft which they might unveil, including fighters, transports, and a prototype vertical take-off and landing plane.

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4. French Somaliland

The French are in the saddle and cracking down hard on protesting Somali tribesmen following Sunday's successfully rigged referendum. A curfew has been imposed in Djibouti, where the Somali community lost a number of lives in postelection rioting. Leaders of the pro-independence party have been arrested.

[redacted] Djibouti looks like an armed camp--the native quarter is closed off with barbed wire and French troops and gendarmes are highly visible. Paris is also said to have reinforcements ready to send to Djibouti if necessary.

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Those two interested bystanders--the Somali Republic and Ethiopia--continue their watchful waiting. [redacted]

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[redacted] the Ethiopians, with the referendum coming out the way they wanted it, might be just as happy to leave it to the French to clamp down on Somali dissidents inside the colony.

5. Saudi Arabia

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6. France

Signs are mounting that the French plan nuclear tests in the Pacific either late this spring or early next summer.

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If the French do as they have in the past, danger warnings to ships and aircraft will be issued at least a month before tests actually begin.

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